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FARE, PLEASE

New Americans

BY

MARGARET T. APPLEGARTH

*Author of "More Short Missionary Plays," "Some
Boys and Girls in America," "India Inklings,"
"Lamplighters Across the Sea," "Mission-
ary Stories for Little Folks," etc.*



NEW YORK

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SHORT MISSIONARY PLAYS

FARE, PLEASE

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FARE, PLEASE

IN TWO ACTS; EIGHTEEN CHARACTERS; FIVE
PRINCIPAL SPEAKING PARTS

THE CAST:

Street-car Conductor.

Eight Passengers.

Mrs. Friend, *another passenger.*

Mr. Czako.

Mrs. Czako, *his wife.*

Sophie Czako, *their twelve-year-old daughter.*

Mona Czako, *their ten-year-old daughter.*

Herza Czako, *their eight-year-old daughter.*

Kyra Czako, *their seven-year-old daughter.*

Gretel Czako, *their five-year-old daughter (very
small for her age).*

Janos Czako, *their ten-year-old son.*

INVITATIONS AND POSTERS:

Small tickets similar to street-car tickets may read: "FARE, PLEASE! This ticket good for one continuous ride (with stop-over privileges in a first-class seat) at the ——— Church on ——— at ———"

For the poster a long street-car cut from cardboard labeled above the windows and under the roof: "SPECIAL CAR FOR ——— CHURCH." Paste the pictures of persons behind every window.

DIRECTIONS:

The interior view of a street-car, extending from the front edge of the platform toward the back, may be made with one row of five chairs facing another row of five chairs, with an aisle between. A conductor in blue uniform and cap should stand at the rear to call out the streets, help the passengers aboard, and ring the bell for signals and for fares. This bell may be attached to the end chair at the rear if there is no way to have it higher up near ceiling where it may be pulled by a cord. When the curtain rises the passengers should be seated as follows:

Left row of five chairs—(1) Mrs. Friend, with her baby (a doll), (2) vacant, (3) lady with arms full of bundles, (4) man reading newspaper, holding it widespread before him, (5) lady.

Right row of five chairs—(1) gentleman (wearing cut-away coat, flower in button-hole, gray gloves, patent leather shoes, high hat, carries cane), (2) young girl in sport clothes, carrying tennis racket, (3) child kneeling on chair to "look out the window," frequently points at objects outside, waves hands, etc., (4) child's mother, continually moving his feet away from the girl with tennis racket, (5) vacant.

NOTE:

The passengers may all sway slightly to represent the jolting of the car. You may care to change the street names for those in your own town.

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ACT I

(In the Street-car)

Conductor. Main Street! Change cars for all points north and south. Step lively, please!

[Enter School Girl, arms full of books, carrying music roll. Seats herself in fifth chair on right. Immediately opens a book, studies diligently, lips moving.]

Conductor. *[Pulls bell cord. Walks down aisle calling:]* Fare, please! *[Stops before gentleman in first seat, who dives into his pocket and hands a greenback to conductor, who makes change.]* Fare, please, lady. *[This to woman in third seat on the left. She has a hard time balancing her many bundles on her lap as she reaches for her wristbag, slips it off her wrist, opens it, removes coin purse, opens purse, and extracts sufficient coins one at a time! Conductor then collects fare from school girl. Calls:]* Construction Street! All aboard there. Say, either get on or get off, can't you?

[Enter Mr. Czako—collarless, red bandanna knotted loosely around neck; wears blue overalls, white-powdered, very old white-powdered coat, dusty slouch hat, muddy shoes; hands very dirty; carries dinner pail. Moves up to front of car and stands lost in wonder at the vision of the fine gentleman. Bends slightly nearer to look him up and down.]

Conductor. *[Walking up aisle.]* Fare, please!

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[No response from the spellbound Mr. Czako. Conductor touches him on the shoulder.] Fare, please.

Mr. Czako. [Startled, looks around in some alarm.] Huh?

Conductor. [Crossly.] Say, ain't you got (five) (seven) cents?

Mr. Czako. [Smiling, and shrugging shoulders amiably.] Oh, sure! Sure! [Wedges his dinner-pail between his knees, as he digs deep into his pocket and hands money to the conductor, who relents and says pointing:] There's a seat behind you. [Mr. Czako looks over his shoulder, backs into second seat on the left, sitting on the very edge of it with his dinner-pail on his knees, obviously still lost in admiration of the gentleman across the aisle. Takes off his own soft tattered hat, all powdery with cement, looks from it to the high silk hat; blows as much dust as possible from his hat, replaces it on his head.]

Conductor. Factory Street! Watch your step, there!

Poor Foreign Woman. [Who has been waving at the car with her bundles as she approaches it from the entrance.] Say, Mister, does this car pass the cemetery?

[Conductor nods.

[Foreign Woman enters the car carrying two immense bundles, one wrapped in newspapers. Has small bunch of flowers in her hand. Wears black shawl over her head, pinned under her chin; full gingham apron. Places

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one bundle in the aisle. All passengers sway; she lurches forward into lap of the man reading a newspaper. He looks over the top of it, wrathfully.]

Conductor. Kindly move up forward in the aisle.

[Foreign Woman picks up her bundle, starts to move forward; all passengers sway again; she almost loses her balance.]

Gentleman. *[Rising and lifting hat.]* Madam, won't you take my seat? *[He guides her courteously by the elbow into the seat. The woman bobs her thanks and murmurs:]* Oh, tank-a! Tank-a!

Mr. Czako. *[Excitedly slaps his knee with genuine enthusiasm. Nudges Mrs. Friend.]* Say, what do you know about that? *[Jerks head in beaming approval.]* That should be why I come on America—all free and equal here, see?

Conductor. Fifth Avenue! All aboard, lady.

[Enter Stylish Lady, in fashionable clothes; lorgnette dangles from chain around her neck. She comes down the aisle peering through the lorgnette in search of a seat. There is none, of course, but

Mr. Czako. *[Jumps up, pushing his dinner pail under his arm, awkwardly pulling off his hat.]* Take my sit, leddy.

[Stylish Lady looks Mr. Czako up and down through her lorgnette, then pulls her skirt around her fastidiously and turns away.]

[Mother in fourth seat on the right lifts child

into her lap, so that the lady may take the child's place.]

[Mr. Czako who has just given a quaint bow, stands transfixed with surprise at the rebuff. Then puts on his hat. Sits down. Strokes his chin dubiously, looking from the woman on his left to Mrs. Friend on his right. Then dusts off his knee with his right sleeve. Looks again at Mrs. Friend, inquiringly.]

[Mrs. Friend gives a half smile.

Mr. Czako. [Responds with a quick shy smile. Brushes his sleeve in his embarrassment. Then jerks his thumb in the direction of the gentleman standing in the aisle:] Guess I ain't no fine gent'mans like him!

Conductor. Pleasant Boulevard.

Mrs. Friend. [Rising, takes small satchel from the floor. Just as she passes Mr. Czako he also arises. She turns:] Oh, are you getting off here, too? I wonder, would you carry the baby for me?

Mr. Czako. [Bobbing his head, excitedly.] Oh, sure! Sure! *[Takes baby in his arms. Both he and Mrs. Friend then leave the car, and walk from the back of platform toward the steps leading to the floor of the auditorium. At edge of steps they stop, and Mr. Czako says:]* One awful schweet leetle nice white bebee! Me, I got six leetle bebee around to my house, yet once!

Mrs. Friend. [Smiling.] Oh, I just knew that you had babies at your house. That's why I wanted you to carry my little boy. How big are your babies now?

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Mr. Czako. [*Shifting baby to his left arm, gesticulates with his right hand.*] Oh, beeg! Beeg! Sophie, she come to here on my shoulder; Janos, he came to here. Not much real bebee left around to my house now. My wife she can't do nuttings mit the kids no more. I wish you could come see her some day.

Mrs. Friend. Why, I should love to come! You must tell me your name and address—

Mr. Czako. [*Pointing to himself.*] Paulos Czako, twelf Tenement Street.

Mrs. Friend. Thank you, I will remember—
Mr. Paulos Czako, twelve Tenement Street. And now, how can I thank you for helping me this way? [*Reaches out her arms and takes the baby.*]

Mr. Czako. Oh, I got an awful proud over carry these so nice leetle clean white bebee. [*Straightens his shoulders, and dusts powder from his coat.*] I ain't so dirty I couldn't carry bebees!

Mrs. Friend. [*Regretfully.*] Ah, you mustn't let the memory of that lady in the street car hurt you; she was judging by the outward appearance, which is never fair, *Mr. Czako*, for you're a true gentleman at heart, and I am very proud to know you. Good-by, and thank you! [*She shakes his hand; then walks down platform steps and seats herself inconspicuously in front row.*]

Mr. Czako. [*Remains standing on platform, hat again in his hand, having waved it after her and thrown a kiss at the baby.*] By-by, bebee! [*Then, after a moment's reflection:*] Vell! vell! You are

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a true gent'mans, Mr. Czako! *Me.* Vell, I ain't so good a gent'mans as I raises my leetle son Janos to be. Joost you vait und see.

CURTAIN

ACT II

(In the Czako Home)

Kitchen table in center of platform. Eight chairs around the walls.

[Enter Sophie. Moves eight chairs close to table.]

[Enter Mona with red tablecloth, which she spreads on the table.]

[Enter Herza with dishes and silverware, which she deposits on the table with a clatter. She and two other sisters distribute the utensils at the eight places.]

[Enter Kyra, with loaf of bread on plate, and a knife. Places these at one end of the table, and commences to slice the bread.]

[Enter Gretel cautiously carrying pitcher of water far too big for her. Her four older sisters swoop down on her, commandingly:]
Now don't you dast to drop it, Gretel Czako. Leave me have that pitcher! *[Gretel elbows them away triumphantly and places pitcher on table safely.]*

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[*Enter Janos.*] What, ain't popper home yet?

Say, I want my supper! [*Takes crust of bread and starts eating it.*]

Sophie. [*Grabbing it away from him.*] For shame you couldn't wait until your popper gets home, Janos Czako.

[*Janos starts chasing her around the table trying to get the crust. The other girls come and go, carrying more dishes, etc.*]

[*Enter Mrs. Czako, wearing gingham house dress and big full apron. Carries frying pan and large fork. Mr. Czako follows her, taking off his coat which he hangs over the back of his chair at one end of table. Mrs. Czako sits opposite him; children scramble to seats along the sides of table. All bow their heads for silent grace; Gretel, however (facing audience), stares through her fingers at her mother's face. When the grace is over, Janos becomes very rude, taking food from his sister's plates as fast as his mother fills them, tweaks their ears and pulls their hair.*]

Mr. Czako. [*Clearing his throat impressively, points at Janos.*] Janos, I want you should be always polite on a leddy,—und sisters is leddies. For sooner you make always politeness on leddies, then I should buy you a white collar und a necktie-from-silk. You like? Yes?

Janos. [*Utterly dazed, runs his finger around his bare neck, stroking it unbelievably.*] Me? A . . . white . . . collar? Me? A . . . necktie . . . from . . . silk? Say, do you mean it?

[*Mr. Czako nods, his mouth too full of food to answer.*]

Chorus of Five Sisters. [*Their forks suspended in mid-air:*] Oh, say, won't Janos look schwell in a necktie-from-silk?

Sophie. Popper, maybe you buy me ribbons-from-silk, yes?

Mona. Popper's going to buy me sashes-from-silk, ain't you, popper?

Herza. Popper's going to buy me silk stockings—

All the Sisters. Popper, I want sashes! Popper, I want ribbons for the hair!

Mrs. Czako. [*Waving her arms.*] Sh! Sh! For shame you drive your poor popper wild mit teasings! He ain't so rich he could buy sashes, und ribbons for hairs.

Janos. [*Jumps up from the table, struts around to his father's chair, thumbs hooked through his armhole seams.*] How soon you buy me that necktie?

Mrs. Czako. Sophie, Mona, Herza, you all carry the dishes off und make a good wash on them. Gretel, you, too, und Kyra. Janos, my son, wait till I speak you a new word.

[*The table is soon cleared, as each girl carries away an armful of dishes. Mr. Czako sits placidly at his place, drumming on the table-cloth. The girls cluster around the doorway curiously.*]

Mrs. Czako. [*Smoothing her apron, and then folding her arms.*] Janos, your popper's awful set

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on how you should be polite on the leddies. [*Mr. Czako nods his approval.*] Your popper says how down on the *sidewalks* you should be polite. [*Mr. Czako nods.*] Und all day by the *schoolhouse*,—polite. [*Mr. Czako nods.*] Und all times here at home mit your sisters, always politeness. Politeness could be very American, Janos. Your popper wants you should be always one nice American. [*Mr. Czako nods more vigorously still.*]

Janos. [*Obviously impressed, but utterly stunned, looks from one parent to the other in silence. Then, swallowing with difficulty, asks:*] But why for should I make this new politeness on everybody?

Mrs. Czako. Because all times when you make politeness on people, they makes politeness back on you, see? Ain't that why, popper?

Mr. Czako. [*Nods.*] Sure I learnt it off the street-car conductor: "Fair, please!" he yells to everybody. But one awful grand leddy she ain't so fair on me. No! I make fair politeness on her, like this: [*Rises, bows, points to his vacant chair.*] "Take a sit, leddy!" But she ain't making no politeness back on me. [*Imitates her disdainful glance, her over-nice expression, her aloof fashion of mincing away, drawing her skirts carefully around her.* Mr. Czako shakes his finger at Janos.] It ain't good American not to make fair play in this so free und equal countree, Janos, see? [*Janos nods.*]

Gretel. [*Comes running over to him.*] Popper, that's what they learnt us at Sunday-school around

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to the Emmanuel Mission. It's verses from the Bible, popper. It says: "Do like udder folks does on you."

Sophie. [*Shaking her head with a superior smile, hurries over also.*] Gretel ain't got it so awful straight, popper. This is how the Bible says: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Mona. [*Also coming nearer.*] It's the Golden Rule, popper.

Mrs. Czako. [*Taking the crestfallen little Gretel on her lap, and kissing the top of her head.*] Sure! Sure! One way they says it in churches, from Bibles; und one way they says it in street-cars, from conductors—"Fair, please!" It ain't so easy you could forget it.

[*All the children wag their forefingers playfully at one another, whispering:*] "Fair, please!"

Janos. [*Coming to the edge of the platform makes a stiff little bow to the audience, and cupping his mouth with the palms of his hands, says:*] It ain't so easy you could forget it—just be fair, please.

[*Entire Czako family rise and bow to the audience, the children curtsying in quaint European style as they whisper:*] "Fair, please!"

CURTAIN

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